

# EDITORIAL

## SUPERNATURAL MATERIALISM

In the current climate of charge and countercharge that is so much a part of the “conversations” between creation-oriented and evolutionary groups, much debate centers around the nature of acceptable evidence. Both groups claim to use the scientific method. While the secular scientist bases his views on what is directly observable through experimentation, the creation scientist claims a larger data base that includes, along with experimentation, the revelation of supernatural events. In the final aspects of this controversy the question eventually boils down to what kinds of data one should include in the analysis of a particular problem. It may be an oversimplification, but the separation of evolutionary and creation ideas pivots around the rejection and acceptance of the presence of the miraculous.

The supernatural has always posed a problem. Those who relate miraculous events generally divide their audience into two groups — the believers and the skeptics. Indifference to the claim for the supernatural is indeed rare. Credulity among the believers depends upon the authority of the individual who reports the event and the lack of dissonance the event causes with their belief system. The skeptic, on the other hand, may either doubt that the event occurred, or, if the event cannot be denied, refutes the interpretation by calling into view the possibility of a mechanism which only uses a currently available body of information.

There is presently a group of supernatural debunkers whose aim is to examine paranormal events such as UFO's, ESP, and psychic prediction. Also included in their purview are the creationists. It is claimed that creationist claims of supernatural intervention in the past history of the earth are unnecessary. The following is a typical debunker's proof that an event is not supernatural. If a person claims to be able to bend spoons with only the power of the mind and an investigator does the same by sleight of hand, then the claimant for the miraculous is a fraud. While I hold absolutely no brief for psychics, spoon benders, or the *National Enquirer* accounts of the strange, I do carry one for creation. It is a false assumption to say that if a phenomenon can be explained by natural causes, then there is no need for God to be involved. In other words, this idea states that if I know of a physical (chemical or biological) law which allows a process to occur, then somehow God is not allowed to use it when He acts.

Perhaps this logical problem can be better explained by the following situation. Suppose that a person came into your home and claimed to be God. The question that you would immediately ask is: How would I know if this statement were true? You could ask for some proof, but what would be acceptable? A personal ID card? Letters of introduction? Ridiculous! Would a miracle be convincing? And if this being accepted your request to perform one, what would you ask to be done? Perhaps bring into existence some object or provide instant transport to some desired place? The possibilities are endless. But what would be enough to provide conclusive proof?

I once had the opportunity of conversing with a professional who attempts to debunk the paranormal. At the end of our conversation, I asked what proof would be enough to convince him in the supernatural. He said that he had often considered the question but had come to no answer. I should like to posit that no event could ever be enough to convince a skeptic of unique abilities. It is little appreciated by most that acceptance of the supernatural is based on situations largely outside the miraculous.

To a believer in creation, the acceptance of Genesis 1-11 is based on the remarkably accurate information from Genesis 12 to Revelation. It is based upon confidence in the lifestyle proposed in this literature as well as information available in Nature. Some may dismiss the above as a religious statement and assert that stating the presence of a God or a creator is the practice of religion. It should be quite clear, however, that the stating of the above does not constitute religion. Religion begins only when man responds to the data. It is unfortunate that some individuals who have responded to the data act out their beliefs in ways that are biased and bigoted. The fact remains, however, that the basic data need be no less valid and useful.

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